

ALL in the THEATRE'S NON-VIOLINES Two Revivals of Comic Opera

Lewis Waller, who is now appearing at Italy's Theatre under his own management, will continue his production of "Monsieur Beaucaire" up to and including Friday night. On Saturday afternoon he will present W. Somerset Maugham's four act play, "The Explorer," in the first time in America, and will continue that piece instead of "Monsieur Beaucaire" for the remainder of his season. Waller first presented "The Explorer" in London about three years ago. The cast which he has engaged for the presentation includes, in addition to himself, Charles Cherry, Constance Collier, Grace Lane, Malcolm Dunn, Harry Carville, Reginald Dune, Suzanne Suddon, Lewis Broughton and Stanley Harrison. "The Explorer" is in four acts and deals with the experiences of a man, who is famous for his African explorations. He is in love with a young woman whose father, an aristocrat of old English family, has fallen into disgrace and is condemned to prison for forgery. The explorer goes to Africa, taking the girl's brother with him. The boy turns out to be a constant source of trouble and to have inherited all his father's bad instincts. He jeopardizes the safety of the entire expedition, but is allowed to escape his folly by leading one portion of the band to almost certain death. The explorer wishes to spare the young woman all knowledge of the truth about her brother's character, and his heroic refusal to explain the boy's death causes the main situation of the drama.

Violet Rorer's dance matinee, which was postponed last week, will be given at the Knickerbocker Theatre on Thursday. The music that accompanies Miss Rorer's dances, which will be played by Nathan Franko and his orchestra of twenty-five men and selected from the compositions of Saint-Saens, Grieg, Elgar, Bohn, Neruda, Tchaikowsky, Bizet, German and McCoy. From these compositions Miss Rorer has gained her inspiration and she will endeavor to interpret by facial expression, pantomime and movement the mood and meaning of the composition. One number on the programme, "The Dance of the Young Hamadryad," by William J. McCoy, is new to New York.

John Galsworthy's comedy, "The Pigeon," begins the last week of its engagement at the Little Theatre to-morrow night, as the season at the Little Theatre closes next Saturday night. The strong characterization displayed in "The Pigeon," and the whimsical humor and gentle irony in the author's point of view have served to give this play of Mr. Galsworthy's a vogue.

Nat Goodwin, Marie Doro, Constance Collier and Lyn Harding will be seen in "Oliver Twist" for the last time this week at the Empire Theatre. The dramatization used makes the play an interesting, old-fashioned melodrama.

A. E. Thomas's play "The Rainbow" at the Liberty Theatre is the best vehicle that Henry Miller has had for several seasons. It has a simple story told in an interesting way and its delicate sentiment has been appreciated by both critics and audiences.

This week brings the 150th performance of "Othello" at the Knickerbocker Theatre. Edward Knoblauch's Arabian Nights play is full of action and color and the work of the star has won nothing but praise.

There are only two weeks more of Charles Hawtrey's engagement in "Dear Old Charlie" at Maxine Elliott's Theatre as the actor must return to England to fulfill contracts for the late spring season which he has found it impossible to cancel. The farce is by Charles Brookfield, the English play censor.

The production of "Bunny Pulls the Strings" is nearing its 300th New York presentation at the Century Theatre. There has only been one change in the cast since the opening performance. Arrangements are being made to continue the engagement through the summer months.

The production of "A Butterfly on the Wheel" at the Thirty-ninth Street Theatre continues its engagement under the management of Lewis Waller. This divorce drama has as its climax the court room scene in the third act in which the innocent wife tries to convince the jury that she is truly innocent.

George Arliss will probably pass the 50th performance of "Kismet" at Waldorf before his present engagement comes to an end. Louis N. Parker has constructed an interesting play around events in the life of the great statesman and Arliss's impersonation is generally accepted as one of his best efforts.

"The Garden of Allah" has at least a month more to run at the Century Theatre, where the spectacular play has been since early in the season. Another big production is promised at the Century next fall.

"Bought and Paid For" may be continued without any summer interruption.

A NEW GENIUS IN COMEDY.

Story of the Young Man Who Has Been Making New York Laugh.

The friends of Al Johnson say that he is only 24. He has all the vitality and exuberance of such youthfulness, and to the audiences at the Winter Garden he is the dominating divinity of the entertainments there. It is no reflection on the character of what the Winter Garden has to offer that the audiences take more delight out of the humor of this black faced comedian than out of any other episode in the plays there. But they find more apparent enjoyment in him than out of any other actor in New York at the present minute. So there is no reason why Mr. Johnson's preponderance in the Winter Garden entertainment should be anything more than a proof of his own talent.

Whether his name be Albert or Alfred nobody seems to know, but it is established in the archives of the Winter Garden that he was born in Washington. He has been through the hardships and struggles that do more than any other training to bring out the talent in an artist. That Mr. Johnson is an artist so far as the possession of a finished dramatic method goes, there can be no question. He has always acted in blackface although it is his aspiration to appear in a regular comedy role. Probably his managers realize that it would be risky to imperil such popularity as his by any experiment. So for the time being he will appear in the disguises that he must assume in the present Winter Garden productions.

His first employment was to sing in the gallery for a comedian known as Al Reeves in the fashion popular a few years ago when a voice from the gallery helped out the song of the man or woman on the

stage. He received \$5 a week for that important service in addition to such a severe punishment as his father that he had to run away to an aunt in New York before he dared try a theatrical career once more. Again he tried singing from the gallery but the Gerry society got him this time and with no other means of support even Washington looked good to him then and back he went to father. Such ambition as he was not to be held down and a few years later found him singing about the variety theatres in Washington—this time, however, with the parental consent. At that stage of his career it even seemed an advancement to him to be engaged to come to Newark to sing.

Johnson is a modest, boyish person who tells without concealment the early tribulations of his artistic career. "I thought I was doing finely at a New York theatre," he said the other day to a New York reporter, "but I was a little discouraged when toward the close of my first week I heard the stage carpenter in conversation with the stage manager.

"You're not going to keep that guy here another week," he said in surprise. "I am all right," was the answer of the manager, "when the crowd on the sidewalk hears him sing, everybody thinks there is a light inside and tries to get in to see what is the matter."

He did not stop long in Newark, but was soon on his way to the West, which may be the reason that he is supposed to come from California. In Chicago it was difficult to find employment and he even knew there what it was to be hungry. That state of fortune does not allow the victim to exercise much choice in selecting his occupation. So the present favorite of the Winter Garden accepted an engagement in a beer garden where he was expected to give a song every ten minutes. After he had done

two songs the first night of his engagement and had begun to look forward to the evening as already partly over, the building burnt down. Then there followed a period of stress and haste, and he was engaged to sing at a variety of dreary disappointments and hungry nights varied to rarely by the opportunity to sing and dance and joke on an empty stomach. He was acting on a Western circuit which brought him to Kansas City when he saw that Lew Dockstader was acting in the same city. His application for a pass was refused on the ground that the famous minstrel had never heard of him.

But he did see him then and there on the stage and engaged him as one of the end men in his company. This was indeed advancement for the boy who had been through such hardships, but refused to desert a career for which he felt he must some day prove his talent. His salary was \$25 a week, a large sum, but according to the gossip of the actors now only one twenty-fourth of what the Shuberts give him every week at the Winter Garden.

"They were happy days," Mr. Johnson said to THE SUN reporter, "although in spite of that large salary, I always owed the Shuberts money. At first I didn't mind that, but it became evident to me that I could not live on \$25 a week. I could not leave because I did not have enough to pay myself out of debt to the show. So one fine day I ran away, made enough money in vaudeville to pay him back, and thus cleared myself of all indebtedness on that score."

Dockstader kept an eye on this promising boy and before a long time had passed he was back again in the company, but of course on terms more in accordance with his merits. Al Reeves found him playing in the cheap vaudeville houses, made him sign a contract to act in his company and made such a contract that Johnson slipped down the water pipe out of his hotel, following a dress suit case, and went away from town. But Al Reeves found him acting again in a vaudeville theatre and he covered so powerfully that Johnson came back to finish out his contract.

Then the wanderjahre began to show

signs of coming to an end. He had shown the power of amusing his audiences in vaudeville. The charm of his irresponsible, imaginative personality and his exuberant spirit were beginning to tell so strongly on his audiences that the managers saw in this young man an attraction of great value. Lew Dockstader, who had engaged him as a boy, made him one of his end men, and later established finally by his success in this field, he went into the vaudeville theatre. It was there that the Shuberts saw him and brought him to the Winter Garden.

Al Johnson is the most individual note that the American comedy stage has produced in years. How much of his present humor is due to his youthful effervescence and the charm of natural spirits it is not possible to say. But there seems to be no risk in the last contract made by the Shuberts with him, by the terms of which he will be a white faced star after one more year. The black cork actors that come to the fore now are less numerous than they used to be, largely because there are so few of them in the business of minstrelsy.

Al Johnson seems likely to revivify the best traditions of the early days in which the minstrel stage sent some of its finest comedians to the regular theatre. Sometimes the young actor makes mistakes in taste. When two strangers entered the Winter Garden a few minutes late the other night he called out from the stage, "Those two fellows do not know how much fun they have missed."

Well, it may be worth while to let the young man know that this specimen of his wit almost cost him these kind words. But he deserves them all and will probably earn many more if he keeps his head.

Self-Evident.

Barney Sheridan, who has tried to "come back" in the dancing game and failed, says that when a man dances 28 times a woman 25 times they lose their "pep" in dancing. He says they may still enjoy dancing and will struggle along all evening, but their limbs lack the springiness and elasticity enjoyed by the younger people.



MARIE
BAXTER.

"A WINSOME WIDOW"

FLORENCE
CAMERON.

"TWO LITTLE
BRIDES"

CHRISTIE
MACDONALD.

"THE SPRING MAID"

ELEANOR ST. CLAIR.

"A WINSOME WIDOW"

MARTHA
WELLINGTON.

"A WINSOME WIDOW"

atre for six weeks and now enters upon its fifth consecutive week at the Garden Theatre. The added feature of the launching of the "Titanic" and the last picture taken of Captain Smith and his chief officers have proved an interesting addition.

The bill to be presented at Hammerstein's Victoria Theatre this week is headed by Irving Berlin, the well known song writer, who will sing some of his own composition. The horse show, consisting of a troupe of nine trained stallions, will give an exhibition. Wish Wynne, the English comedienne, will make her first appearance at the Victoria, and the skit, "From Zara to Uncle Tom," will be presented by Will Murphy, Blanche Nichols and company. Laddie Cliff, the clever boy comedian and dancer, will also be seen and David Higgins will present a one act play of Tennessee, "At Pine Ridge." Others on the bill are Frank Stafford and company in "A Hunter's Game," Norton and Lee, singers and dancers; Maud Tiffany, Love and Edwards and Smith and brothers.

Honors at the Colonial this week will be divided by Zeldo Sears and company in the new one act comedy, "The Vardrobe," and Edward Ables and company in "Waiting at the Church," also a new comedy sketch, which was

DRESSING ROOMS OF NEW STYLE.

What the Little Theatre Does for Its Actors' Comfort and Health.

Arthur Barry, who plays the part of Sir Thomas Hoston, the Justice of the Peace in John Galsworthy's comedy "The Pigeon" at the Little Theatre, is an amateur photographer of long experience. He first developed the hobby ten years ago while he was still in England. At the matinee performances of "The Pigeon" and of the special bills at the Little Theatre Mr. Barry took kodak pictures of many of the members of the company in the dressing room by natural light.

"These dressing rooms at the Little Theatre," said Mr. Barry, as he was taking the photos out of the bath in the washbowl in his dressing room the other night, "are the only ones I have ever been in which admitted enough daylight to take photographs by. Any one of the dressing rooms would make almost perfect studios for the light in the right. A four second exposure gives a very clear negative."

All of the dressing rooms in the Little Theatre have windows admitting natural light. The accompanying photographs of characters in "The Pigeon" and "The Flower of the Palace of Han" show the results attained by Mr. Barry with his kodak. The negatives were developed in the pictures printed in Mr. Barry's dressing room.

Mr. Barry has over 3,000 kodak pictures of American scenes, buildings, actors and actresses, which he has taken in the past ten years, since he made his first appearance here in Charles Frohman's production of Sullivan's last opera, "The Rose of Persia," at Daly's Theatre. He has one large trunk in a New York storehouse crammed full of negatives. Among them are pictures of practically every State capital in the United States, many theatres, Pro scenes, particularly in winter, and a number of the different theatrical companies in which he has appeared.

ACTORS IN A MOB.

Many Players of Standing Taking Small Parts in "Kismet."

Evidence of the overcrowded condition of the theatrical profession is afforded by the considerable number of players of experience and standing who are appearing in very small roles and as so-called "extra people" in the "Kismet" Company at the Knickerbocker Theatre. In the programme merely the surnames of the men and women of the Oriental crowds are given. Many of these have been assumed for the "Kismet" engagement only. These ordinarily high salaried players do not wish to advertise the fact that they have been driven to work in such humble parts. The costumes and heavy make up serve to disguise them completely. They are not called upon to speak so these "extra people" of the moment are quite safe from identification.

A first class stock company might be drafted from the membership of the "Kismet" mob. The names of the players would be sufficiently well known to give the organization standing in any American city. One actor who ordinarily holds the position of leading man in stock companies on an important touring company not long ago and of course he made haste to shake the dust of Bagdad from his feet and leave his modest career behind him. Among the women "extra people" there are even more celebrities than there are among the men. A very competent and attractive leading woman, for example, merely sits on the stage in Oriental fashion in the hazy scene, Most of the time, moreover, her back is toward the audience,

season and comes to the Montauk Theatre to-morrow in "Snobs," a satirical farce by George Bronson Howard. In it he essays the role of a millman who becomes a duke and enters society's fold. Prominent in the company are Myrtle Tammill, Eva McDonald, Katharine Stewart, Marie Fitzgerald, John Cumberland, Roy Fairchild, Orlando Daly and Frank Brownlee.

Winchell Smith's comedy, "The Fortune Hunter," will be seen for the first time in stock at the Crescent Theatre this week. The last time the play was presented in Brooklyn was at the Montauk Theatre with John Barrymore in the title role. The story of "The Fortune Hunter" is one that belongs to the stage small town New York familiar to all. Percy G. Williams has arranged with Cohen & H. to have the original scenery and production from the Gaiety Theatre. George Allison will have the John Barrymore part. Leah Winslow will be seen in the leading feminine role.

Sam Mann, the Bell Family and Frank Fogarty are the three stars at the Orpheum Theatre this week. Sam Mann will be seen in Karen Holmes' comedy, "The New Leader." The Bell Family contribute a musical act and Fogarty, Brooklyn's native son, is known throughout the amusement world as the "Dublin Minstrel." Comedy will be furnished by Harry Brock, who will be assisted by the Minstrel Sisters, "Chevyne Days" with its glimpse of wild Western life is another of the important attractions. Among other entertainers are Edmund Hays and company in "The Piano Player," Olga Petrova, the Russian, in their "three cubes" oddity. Those French Girls, Ed Morton, the singing comedian and Ruby Raymond and her dancing boys.

The Bushwick Theatre this week features R. A. Roberts, England's protean actor, who will appear in his dramatic sketch "Dick Turpin." Will H. Macart and Ethelwynne Bradford will be on hand in their sketch "A Legitimate Hold Up" and Williams and Van Alstyne will interpret their own work. Bert Levy, the cartoonist, Harry Brock, a comedian of the happy-go-lucky type, Mlle. Vallette, animal trainer, and Wilson and Wilson, comedy entertainers, who also appear.

"A Persian Garden," a miniature musical comedy, will be seen at the Grand Central Theatre. Also the programme are Olive Briscoe, Raymond and Caverly and Tom Edwards.

The "Social Mads," Joe Hurtig's show, will return to the Star Theatre this week. The cast has not been changed, but the attraction itself has been equipped with new features and funny scenes. George Stone and Jennie Austin head the cast.

"The Great Weaver," who has been engaged as a special feature to appear at the Gaiety Theatre this week in conjunction with the Charles Robinson "Kismet" mob, many of whom are handicapped, chains, locks and ropes. He promises to accomplish the hardest feat that his audience can devise.

Kept Vow 68 Years Never to Cross a River.

From the St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

John M. Free, 80 years old, kept a vow sixty-eight years in which time he never crossed the Mississippi River, though he had lived continuously in St. Louis, born in Switzerland and christened there Giovanni Frei he came to St. Louis at the age of 20.

The three months trip in crossing the ocean so disgusted and terrified the young Swiss Italian that he vowed on reaching St. Louis he never again would trust his body over water. Ferries at St. Louis were succeeded by bridges, but the 80-year-old man did not cross the river.

Dakota Woman's Fight With a Wolf.

From the Kansas City Journal.

Barney Sheridan, who has tried to "come back" in the dancing game and failed, says that when a man dances 28 times a woman 25 times they lose their "pep" in dancing. He says they may still enjoy dancing and will struggle along all evening, but their limbs lack the springiness and elasticity enjoyed by the younger people.